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RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO IMMEDIATE 0612
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PESHAWAR 000001

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SUBJECT: SECURITY OPERATIONS IN KHYBER IMPOSE SHORT TERM CURFEW ON
TRUCKS TRAVELING TO AFGHANISTAN

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REASON: 1.4 (a), (b), (d)

Summary

1. (C) On January 2, the Torkham Highway crossing point into Afghanistan reopened to truck traffic, including trucks supplying NATO/ISAF, after being closed December 30 due to military security operations. Operation "Daralam" or "Here I Come" was launched to increase security for convoys and to rid Khyber Agency of militants close to Peshawar. The homes of two local notables including one senator and one Malik were destroyed. One of these, Malik Najib Ullah, who had been arrested, had allegedly allowed militants to use his home. The explosion that destroyed four oil tankers on December 29 was probably due to pilfering not a militant attack. End Summary.

Operation Daralam

2. (SBU) On December 30, the first day of Muharram, the first month of the Islamic calendar, Pakistan Army and Frontier Corps soldiers began operation "Daralam" or "Here I Come" against militants in the Khyber Agency. The operation closed down the road between Peshawar and the Khyber Pass, Torkham Highway. However 92 U.S. contracted trucks with NATO/ISAF cargo were able to cross the border into Afghanistan that day. The Pakistan Army General Headquarters (GHQ) advised the Office of Defense Representative in Pakistan (ODRP) that military operations were initiated because of attacks on NATO/ISAF truck traffic along the Torkham Highway.

3. (C) The Khyber Political Agent Tariq Hayat Khan told Acting Political Office (APO) December 31, that operation "Daralam" which means "Here I Come" could last three days or longer to clear out the militants from the area. Local authorities imposed a curfew, resulting in a shortage of personnel at the custom station at Torkham Pass (the Pakistan side of the Khyber Pass). The operations coincided with the normal slowdown/shutdown of the border during the first 10 days of Muharram. While the security operation was unexpected, it caused minimal disruption because fewer trucks crossed the border during the holiday. (Note: Traffic resumed on January 2

but was expected to temporarily close again for the Ashura holiday on January 7/8.)

14. (C) According to Khan, the operation was a significantly larger operation than one previously planned for Khyber but delayed due to the fight in Bajaur. Operation Daralam was expanded and launched on short notice, not only due to the attacks on the truck convoys, but because notable militants that had begun to operate in the area. Khan noted that among the killed or captured on December 31, were six Uzbeks that he believed were transiting Khyber. Khan said that he was "linked up" with the military forces for "his operation" and had been at the front several times since the start of the campaign. He stated that 600 ground troops accompanied by 12 tanks, an airborne observation plane for artillery control and two sets of attack helicopters comprised the bulk of Pakistan forces. Khan explained he had used the attack helicopters to stop fleeing militants which were attempting to cross the Kabul River by boat into Mohmand province the afternoon of December 31.

15. (C) Khan stated that he had ordered the destruction of the homes of two local notables including one senator. One of these, Malik Najib Ullah, who had been arrested, had allegedly allowed militants to use his home to carry out kidnappings for ransom in and near Peshawar and been at home when the operation began.

New Khyber Convoy Protection

16. (SBU) Khan stated that convoy operations would recommence on January 2 and up to 250 trucks from all carriers could be accommodated between the 8:00am to 2:00pm when the route would be secured. Once convoy operations recommence, he will have an entire wing of 600 Frontier Corps soldiers guarding the entire

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route as opposed to the check posts previously used. He explained that one of the additional duties for the expanded force would be to "bottle up" access roads and provide more strategic deployment of forces to prevent attacks.

Fuel Tankers Destroyed To Hide Pilferage

17. (SBU) On December 29, a blast destroyed four fuel tankers at Torkham Pass. While initially reported to be the result of militants, according to Khan, pilferage was the likely motivation behind the destruction. The four trucks, all belonging to the same owner, were parked separately from other fuel tankers and the explosion was clearly smaller than what would have occurred had the trucks been full of fuel. The drivers of the trucks, who disappeared immediately after parking the trucks, returned to the scene after the explosion unharmed. A local scam has fuel tanker drivers selling most of the contents of their cargo locally before blowing up their vehicles and claiming militants attacked them.

Comment

18. (C) Khan, a former tank officer in the Army, was proud of the "combined arms team" that he had been able to assemble and seemed to be enjoying barking out instructions to the deployed forces during APO's visit. This is at least the second operation to clear out militants in Khyber in the last four months; whether a similar operation will be needed in the near future will depend on how long the Frontier Corps is able to maintain deployments in the area.

VIA